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CHAFEE SECURES \$491,782 GRANT FOR RI HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today announced that Rhode Island Hospital will receive \$491,782 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for construction of a new Emergency Department. The emergency medical facility – the busiest in New England and the region’s only Level I trauma center - is now filled beyond its intended capacity.

“I am pleased that this funding will allow Rhode Island Hospital to build upon its exceptional reputation for patient care and service to our community,” said Chafee. “It will also help Rhode Island’s busiest hospital meet the growing, future needs of our state’s population.”

Rhode Island Hospital plans to increase the size of the emergency department by 51,000 square feet, which would more than double the current number of treatment areas. This plan would provide a separate entrance for urgent care, increase the size of the trauma area and provide adequate space for much-needed radiology equipment. The new triage area will allow for greater patient privacy and increasing the ability of practitioners to treat patients more effectively and efficiently.

On March 29, 2002, Chafee wrote to Senators Tom Harkin and Arlen Specter, then Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Committee, to request funding for Rhode Island Hospital (RIH) in the fiscal year 2003 Appropriations bill. He stated, “The limited treatment areas at RIH provide inadequate space for physicians and hospital employees to practice safely and effectively. Hospital stretchers are often lined up in the triage area and in the hospital corridors, compromising patient privacy. These conditions threaten the quality of care, diminish satisfaction among patients, employees and physicians, and hinder efforts to expand or improve technology at the current facility.”

Rhode Island Hospital serves patients from the entire state of Rhode Island and a significant portion of patients from Southeastern Massachusetts. The population of this service area is 1.5 million and is expected to increase to 1.6 million by 2010. It is also projected that actual visits to the hospital will grow from approximately 74,000 in 2000 to over 103,000 by 2010.

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